

464 villagers who hold too little land to support their families.¹⁸ Some village men peddle vegetables during the slack agricultural seasons or find some other seasonal work, but there is no real solution to the economic problem. Since Lukang offers few job opportunities for village people, the only alternative is for the village's labor surplus to move on to Taipei to find work. While the move to Taipei for most village men is merely a temporary migration to supplement family income, some establish themselves in the city and move their entire families there. Those who still have a small piece of land in the village area then usually rent it out, or ask someone else to cultivate it for them. The owner thus gains some economic security by retaining title to the land; very few people will sell their land outright.

DIET AND NUTRITION

433 The Hsin Hsing villager is far from self-sufficient, either for food
• 261 or other needs. After the harvest the villager consumes his own vegeta-
432 bles, rice, and sweet potatoes, but during the course of the year, he
[439] must buy a great part of his staple food. Vegetables, additional rice,
[443] pork, fish, salt, tea, sugar, sesame seed oil, peanut oil, lard, and any
number of other items are purchased either in Lukang or from itiner-
ant merchants. Additional necessary annual purchases like clothing,
tools, and other necessities, almost none of which are produced by the
villagers themselves, show how dependent the villager is on the outside
world.

262 The diet of the Hsin Hsing villager, except perhaps for the most
poverty-stricken, depends more on occasion than perhaps anything
else. The foods eaten at daily mealtimes are usually quite simple and
inexpensive, and thrift dominates these ordinary meals. However, on
262 special religious or other festive occasions when it is necessary to feed
574 guests, thrifty regard for the kinds and quantities of food served be-
577 comes the least important factor. A villager invites criticism from his
fellows if he is not thrifty in his everyday eating and living habits, but
the man who exercises thrift on a festive occasion when outside guests
are present usually earns the reputation of being "stingy."

241 An additional determinant of diet is the phase of the agricultural
cycle. During the harvest season, for example, it is customary for every-
262 one engaged in the heavy work to eat five meals a day. The meal at
264 the end of the day's work is particularly elaborate and nutritious. A
577 man may also earn himself the reputation of being stingy if, for exam-
ple, he is frugal with respect to the food he serves his field laborers at
harvesttime. Word of his stinginess spreads quickly, and such a farmer
000 may find it difficult to obtain field labor at future harvesttimes. The

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The villager's diet is greatly affected by factors other than his financial condition or even his own personal likes and dislikes in food. Social pressure is a determining force.

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Although the financial condition of the family does play a part in determining the differences in exact details of meals, most villagers' meals are very much alike. Rice is always preferred as the center or focus of each meal. Various items such as dried fish and some steamed, dried, or fresh vegetables may be added to the rice. Pickled items may also be included for variety and flavor.

Many village families, however, because of poverty or, sometimes, for reasons of thrift, substitute sweet potatoes for rice. If fresh, the sweet potatoes are steamed; otherwise, shredded dry sweet potatoes will usually be steamed together with the rice with which they are mixed. Sweet potatoes are much less expensive than rice, since they are grown on the less desirable nonirrigated dry land. Generally speaking, the villagers do not like sweet potatoes, and the adults complain that when children eat sweet potatoes they soon become hungry again and that they have stomach pains. On the other hand, rice is universally enjoyed and is held to be satisfactorily filling.

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FOOD AND RITUAL ENTERTAINMENT

The villagers' best opportunities for good eating as well as entertainment come mainly on religious, magical, and other occasions which are usually marked by festivity. These festive occasions are fairly frequent and have widely diverse origins; the religion of the villagers is Taoist, with an admixture of Buddhist and animistic beliefs and, of course, ancestor worship. In addition, the people frequently take part in magical rituals requiring the offices of shamans and various forms of divination in the case of illness, when demons are thought to be involved. Ample food of relatively high quality is served at almost all of these frequently performed religious and magical rituals, especially when outside guests are present. The amounts and kinds of food vary with the occasion. At one of the ordinary *pai-pai* (any ritual in which food or other items are sacrificed to gods or ancestors), which in the Hsin Hsing village area occur at least four times a month and at which there are usually no guests, the additional food may be some cooked pork or fresh fish and soup. This food is used for the ceremonial sacrifices and eaten later. There are elaborate food preparations for larger *pai-pai* dinners such as those for the village god, or at marriage festivals to which outside guests are always invited, or to a lesser degree at dinners for laborers at harvesttime. Sometimes at weddings, funerals, or other such occasions there are as many as eighteen

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courses, served with wine. Chickens, ducks, and geese are slaughtered, and on some of these occasions the villager will even slaughter one of his pigs to feed his many guests.

Other than these large festive occasions, the simple monthly *pai-pai* are the sole occasions when a family which can afford it may eat more and better food without incurring criticism from neighbors. Therefore, although it may not be necessary to include pork in the minimum sacrifice at the particular ritual, these occasions have become socially sanctioned opportunities for eating better foods than usual. This is one reason why the villagers look forward to and continue to observe even the least important *pai-pai* ceremonies.

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At the same time, there is a certain amount of ambivalence among some adults toward the larger *pai-pai*. They realize that they can scarcely afford the high cost of such festive occasions which often saddle them with debts. However, in addition to the pleasurable anticipation with which the villagers look forward to these occasions, social pressure also makes it necessary for each family to take part in these ritual affairs. Each guest who attends such a large dinner is expected to reciprocate and invite his host to some similar occasion in the future.

This kind of socially necessary variation in the eating habits of the Hsin Hsing villagers means that the diet and general nutrition of the villagers is not at all constant in either quantity or quality.

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Besides the feasting the ritualistic events occasion, they are the villager's main source of entertainment as well. For in addition to the festive dinners served on such occasions as the village god's birthday, a funeral, or the going-away party for village boys going off to the army, usually there is also entertainment. This may be formal, such as a travelling professional puppet show, or informal, such as drinking and finger games. Such events attract neighbors as well as friends and relatives from surrounding villages. Therefore villagers enjoy these entertaining ritualistic events, not only in their own village, but in neighboring villages with which they have ties of kinship, friendship, and the like.

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For entertainment outside their own village or neighboring villages, the people sometimes go to Lukang to see a movie at the local theatre. The movies may be of Chinese, Japanese, or American origin. There are usually two showings a day, one in the original language with Chinese titles and the other with Taiwanese (Min-nan) dubbed in for the convenience of the many illiterate village people.

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More often the villagers go to the local Taiwanese opera house in Lukang, where travelling companies perform regularly to large crowds. Although the movies and the opera are relatively inexpensive, villagers do not often indulge in these forms of entertainment. This is mainly because of the amount of time involved in going to Lukang

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of sugarcane or some flavored ice in the hot weather. Wherever they may be, the men usually sit about smoking, talking about their crops or work, or telling stories and jokes. Some men play Chinese chess or listen to the radio at the village store.

The women have less free time during the day regardless of the agricultural season. During the slack seasons women are occupied steadily with ordinary household tasks. During the busy season they are simply busier, taking on additional work in the fields, cooking food at home for any hired laborers, or drying rice or vegetables after the harvest. When women do not have pressing work, they often spend their time in small groups working on fiber hats or mending clothing. At times as they work they may listen to Taiwanese opera on a radio, but more often they simply talk or gossip. Women also spend some of their free time visiting with neighbors or *ch'in tsu* in the village. If their own parents or brothers live in villages nearby, they may visit them on occasion for several hours.

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OLD AGE

As old age approaches—and a person is considered old after fifty—both men and women gradually retire from farm work and household tasks if they have children who are able to take over the work and care for them. While this is usually the case, in these days there are also times when married sons go off to work in Taipei, and it then becomes necessary for the old man and the daughters-in-law to work the land. In such cases even the old mother has to do a great deal of work in the household.

In general, however, old age is a time of great freedom and leisure for men and women. Since they have few pressing responsibilities, they are free to wander about the village and visit each other. At most, old people of either sex may help watch their young grandchildren during the day. Some of the older people, especially one or two grandmothers in Hsin Hsing, are known for their ability to tell wonderful stories based on Taiwan opera or puppet shows which they have seen in the surrounding villages or in Lukang.

Unlike younger people, the old are not under pressure to adhere to the proprieties of life. Old women smoke in public, appear at public dinners normally attended by men only, and are generally outspoken. Old men frequent banquets and festivals held in Hsin Hsing and even surrounding villages. On such occasions they care little how much they eat and frequently gorge themselves with the good food. Their juniors watch and say nothing, and in fact seem to enjoy watching the old men behaving in ways that they cannot. At most they may laugh and make good-natured jokes at how much the old man is still capable of

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RELIGION AND MAGIC

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The twenty-fourth day of the fourth month is the birthday of the Hain Hsing village god, Ta Shih Kung. Those villagers who have been working elsewhere normally come home for this *pai-pai*, and even some of the members of village families whose business or work has required them to move to the city return for this day and stay overnight or several days with relatives in the village. The main reason for this influx is that the celebration is one of the gayest and most festive of all those held during the year.

All families worship Ta Shih Kung in a joint *pai-pai* held in the courtyard of one of the largest *tsu* houses in the village. A shaman is present to exorcise any devils that may be near and to invite the god to eat the sacrificed food, the best the villagers have all year. Guests are invited from all over the area to join in the festivities, and for weeks or even months in advance the villagers issue invitations to relatives and friends. At the time of the *pai-pai*, the villagers even invite their neighbors' guests, if they happen to know them, to eat their food. People walk through the village, pounce upon acquaintances who are ambling along or who may have just come out of the house of another villager, and tug at their arms and clothing to get them into their homes to eat. (My wife and I were virtually dragged through seven different dinners that evening.) The villagers generally prepare so much food for the occasion that there is always enough for a few more, and they talk for months about the number of people they entertained that day. One old woman, a member of a relatively poor village family, boasted that she had had seventy guests at her house and that she had fed three tables of guests five times. Some of these guests stayed overnight and had to be fed again the next day. She spent NT \$700 (US \$19.50) on food and wine and had been saving her money for months for this occasion.

For the most part, all these guests reciprocate and invite the Hain Hsing villagers to join them at the *pai-pai* celebrating the birthday of their own village god at a later date. The *pai-pai*, therefore, functions to maintain relationships with *ch'in ch'i* and friends and to enable families to meet new people. In addition, since the villages hold these *pai-pai* at different times, the people of the whole area are assured of a continuing source of entertainment.

The entertainment includes not only the good food and the contact with different people but also a puppet show performed by a professional group hired from a city. The puppet show is based on stories from dynastic history and is a source of delight to the villagers and their guests. Adults and children from neighboring villages usually wander over during the course of the day to watch the show. The carnival atmosphere of the occasion is augmented by the presence of vendors of food, sweets, sugarcane, and betel nut who come from Lukang and surrounding villages to sell their wares.

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146 portions of meat, fish and eggs. The doctor also stated that there were probably insufficient quantities of niacin, vitamin A, and iron although not as serious as the first listed items. Finally, outside of the citrus season, there were shortages of ascorbic acid.

125 The daily pattern of eating was checked in a num-
262 ber of different ways. I had five cooperating households (a stratified sample) keep records of food for a month which we checked each evening. Food was richer the first few days, probably indicating a "face saving" process. A second method was to check all 66 households on a single evening for that day's consumption. Alternatively, houses were checked following a single meal. Finally, random interviews on any subject periodically noted the food being prepared or recently consumed.

262 Polished rice was the main item of the diet in about 45% of the households; a combination of rice and sweet potatoes in about 52%; and primarily sweet potatoes only in about 3%. All households eat sweet potatoes, as a kind of fried pancake, steamed, or as a type of mush.

[178] According to villagers, the trend over time has been towards a greater emphasis on rice and a lesser emphasis on sweet potatoes. Rice, if available, is eaten at every meal, hot, cold, or as hsi-fan (a thin gruel). All villagers agree that gruel should not be eaten in the morning by any man who must do hard work in the fields as it

• 261 is not sufficiently nourishing; also, it should be denied
855 to small children along with other liquids in the evening
252 in order to prevent bed wetting. Rice was usually steamed
or boiled; it was only fried for a dish at a banquet or
when mixed with left-overs for lunch.

262 Almost every meal also included liberal quantities
of ~~vegetables~~ vegetables which were lightly cooked and were usually
placed on top of the rice to eat. The particular vege-
tables were drawn from those that were in season. Although
many of them were grown in the village, others were pur-
chased in Hsin Tien. Men were asked to shop on the way
262 home from work or a trip to town. If a woman went to
443 town, she usually shopped for herself and several others.
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[493] One village man drove his three-wheeled bicycle cart into
the Taipei market each morning about 3:30 a.m. and bought
a load of vegetables and pedaled home. After he left Hsin
Tien, he stopped in each small village or group of houses
other than the two villages with vegetable markets and
sold produce from the cart. As he got closer to Sanlei,
he lowered his prices. He almost always was able to com-
262 pletely sell out the last of his load in Sanlei. Villag-
178 ers generally felt that there had not been significant
changes in the absolute quantity of vegetables consumed,
but there had been great changes in the variety used and
that people now ate more out-of-season and fresh vegeta-
262 bles. This was probably true but it seemed to us that

262 than one-quarter of a pound per man per day. It is a rare
village household that would have two meatless days in a
179 row. Some older villagers claimed that in their youth,
262 meat appeared on the table only once each week but others
claimed it was more often. Any question about economic
conditions in the past almost always produced mild argu-
252 ments and disagreements. Pork is cut in very small pieces
and mixed with vegetables in cooking and most often, seems
262 to be used primarily for flavoring and for the fat. Vil-
826 lagers agreed that a person needed meat regularly in order
to provide grease for the joints in order to prevent sore
262 muscles. It was said that beef (water buffalo or yellow
[231] oxen) was eaten in the city. However, the water buffalo
was so important to the villagers that no village man
could bring himself to eat it. However, when one was
killed in an accident, it would be sold to a meat store.
Small boys occasionally snared mountain rats which were
eaten but the house rat was considered too dirty to eat.
[751] Dog meat was quite expensive and rarely eaten although
everyone said that a bit of dog meat in the fall would
help prevent colds all winter. No village dog could be
eaten however. Fowl were also significant but only on the
special occasions averaging about three to five times per
month.

• 261 According to most Chinese, eating is one of the
252 joys of life and cooking is a well-developed art form.

- 231 considered acceptable by rural people. It is said that
[368] city people prefer a pig of 160 chin or less because they
• [241] prefer less fat.

231 Two years ago the slaughtering tax was only
[433] \$280.00. Under the Japanese, a similar slaughtering permit
[651] was required but the tax then represented less than 10% of
[648] the pig's value whereas now it is close to 20%. In any
case, the high tax plus the high cost of the bean cakes
has created the belief that no one can make a profit rais-
ing pigs although the government, through the farmers'
231 association, is encouraging farmers to raise pigs. The
[433] village Small Unit Head and Vice Unit Head of the asso-
[474] ciation have attended several meetings concerned with en-
couraging hog production. Although they have passed out
much literature, they have had little success in promoting
pig production. No small part of their failure is because
they too believe that there is little profit in pigs al-
though in order to set an example, both are raising more
231 pigs than the average villager. Pigs seem more valuable
[241] for their manure in making compost than for meat. Only
farmers who have ready sources of pig feed and a need for
231 fertilizer raise pigs. There is one major exception, a
[583] family planning a wedding may raise a pig for the feast.
Although the amount saved is not much, the cost goes out
a little at a time rather than a big cash expenditure at
the time of the wedding. Only one Sanlei man presently
is trying to raise pigs for a profit.